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"I will swing you twelve times, Florence."—Page 26.

Florence Arnott ;

OR,

I S S H E G E N E R O U S ?

BY

M. J. McINTOSH,

AUTHOR OF "ELLEN LESLIE," "JESSIE GRAHAM," "BLIND  
ALICE," "GRACE AND CLARA," ETC., ETC.

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# FLORENCE ARNOTT.



## CHAPTER I.

### A WINTER MORNING.

WHEN last I took leave of my young friends, it was autumn, and we were looking forward to Christmas entertainments at Flowerhill, where a play written by Mr. Dickinson himself was to be acted. Those of you who have read Jessie Graham, may remember that I thought it probable my next story for you would be of these entertainments.

Mr. Dickinson kept his promise. The play was written; and a fortnight before Christmas, came William Temple, full of joyful expectation.



The day after his arrival he rode over with his uncle to see me, and to invite Harriet and Mary to be at Flowerhill the next morning, to hear the play read, and to receive their parts, for parts they were both to have. Soon after Mr. Dickinson and William left us, the sky was overcast with heavy clouds, which, as evening approached, became more and more wild and dark. I predicted a snow-storm, and Harriet and Mary went to sleep with little hope of being able to fulfil their engagement.

The snow-storm came, but it lasted only a few hours of the night, and the next morning's sun rose clear and bright. Bright indeed, dazzlingly bright, as its rays fell on the pure, white snow with which the whole ground was covered, or shone through the icicles, with which every tree was hung, making them look like glittering diamonds, in each of which there seemed a tiny rainbow.

I had ordered the carriage at an early hour,

and we had scarcely breakfasted when the merry jingle of the sleigh-bells told that it was at the door. Even the horses seemed gayer than usual, and whirled us along so rapidly, that had not the reins been in the hands of Henry, whom I knew to be the steadiest and most careful coachman in the country, I should have been half frightened. William saw us from the parlor window, and had the door open for us as soon as we were out of the sleigh. We were just cold enough to enjoy the warm parlor; and as we drew close to the blazing wood-fire, Mary exclaimed, "Aunt Kitty, do you not wish it was always winter?"

"No, Mary, for I love spring flowers and summer and autumn fruits."

"Oh! I had forgotten them," said Mary, "but I am very glad there is a winter too."

"So am I, Mary, very glad, and very thankful to Him who gives us the varying pleasures which make each season welcome."

We were interrupted by Mr. Dickinson, who

came in with the play. He read it for us, and I am sure no play was ever heard with more pleasure. Harriet and Mary received their parts, and were now quite impatient to get home, that they might begin to study them.

This pleasant morning visit was all which I saw of the Christmas entertainments at Flowerhill; for, on my return home, I found a carriage waiting for me, and a letter requesting me to come to a very dear friend, who was both ill and in trouble, and needed a nurse and a comforter. You may be sure that I made no delay in complying with this request; but before I tell you anything of my visit, I would give you some account of my friend, Mrs. Arnott, and of her daughter Florence, as she had appeared to me about eighteen months before, when I had spent some weeks with her mother under very different circumstances.

## CHAPTER II.

## THE VISIT.

MRS. Arnott was younger than I, yet not so much younger but that we had been playmates in childhood. As we grew older we continued warm friends. When she married, I rejoiced in her happy prospects, and found but one thing in Mr. Arnott I would have desired to change—he lived thirty miles from me, and this was felt as a wide separation between friends who had been accustomed to meet every day. I soon found that the separation was to be much greater. Mr. Arnott liked travelling, had a large fortune, and little to do. He took his wife to England; and after travelling in England, Scotland, and Wales, they passed over to the continent of Europe, and having

seen whatever was of most interest in France, Switzerland, and Germany, went into Italy, and spent more than a year in the city of Florence. Here their little girl was born, and received her name in remembrance of a home which they had found very agreeable. When Florence was about two years old, her father and mother returned to America. They came in the autumn, and joyfully as I welcomed back my friend, I soon began to fear that she would not be able to spend many winters with us. Her constitution had always been delicate, and her long abode in the soft, warm climate of Italy, seemed to have unfitted her completely for the endurance of our rough and cold northern winters. The first winter she went out very seldom, the second not at all, and the third she showed symptoms of serious illness so early, that her physician advised Mr. Arnett to take her at once to a more southern climate. They went to Florida, and their delightful country place was again let for several years, while

they spent their winters at the south and their summers in travelling through the middle and northern states.

In this way, Mrs. Arnott seemed gradually to acquire more vigorous health, yet it was not till Florence was more than ten years old, that they returned to their own home with some hope of being able to remain at it during the whole year. As soon as they began to feel themselves settled, Mrs. Arnott wrote to ask a visit from me, requesting that I would bring my nieces, Harriet Armand and Mary Mackay, with me. She was very urgent in this last request, saying, that she hoped to benefit her little Florence by the society of children of nearly her own age, who had been as carefully educated as she knew Harriet and Mary had been. I will copy for you a part of my friend's letter, from which I gained some knowledge of the disposition of Florence, even before I made this visit.

“You will soon see,” wrote Mrs. Arnott, “that

my little girl's education has been sadly neglected. By her education, I do not mean what is ordinarily taught in schools. Wherever we have made our home, even for a few months, we have procured for her the best teachers we could find, and as she is a child of quick mind, she is quite as well informed as most children of her age. But to the education of her *heart*, which I know you will think with me of far more importance, no attention has been paid. Her father's extreme indulgence to this only child, my feeble health, and our roving life, have left her so unrestrained, that I begin to fear she is becoming very self-willed. Yet her temper is naturally so amiable, and her feelings so affectionate, she is so anxious to please those she loves, and so grieved at the least appearance of blame from them, that I hope it will not be difficult to correct her faults."

As I felt much interested in this little girl, and thought, with her mother, that the association with other and more carefully taught chil-

dren might be serviceable to her, I determined at once to accept the invitation for Harriet and myself, and if my brother and Mrs. Mackay would consent, for Mary too. Indeed, I hoped more advantage for Florence from the companionship of Mary than of Harriet. Harriet was so gentle, and would yield to her young friend so quietly, that Florence would seldom discover from her how much she was yielding, and how unreasonable her own exactions were. But Mary had a strong will, and though she had been taught that she must on many occasions submit to the will of others, it was always done with a very great effort. I was quite sure, therefore, that Florence would know whenever Mary yielded a point to her, and moreover, that she would be very plainly informed if Mary thought her demands unreasonable.

Mr. and Mrs. Mackay readily consented that Mary should go with me, and Mary was always pleased with the prospect of a visit, especially if



the visit could be made with Harriet and Aunt Kitty. Of my designs for the improvement of Florence, I did not, of course, say anything to either of my nieces.

Our visit was made in June, when it was too warm to travel in midday, so, rising very early, we were five miles from home before the sun rose; and before it became uncomfortably warm, had gone seventeen miles, to a little village where we were to dine, rest our horses, and remain quiet till the afternoon became cool, when fourteen miles more of travelling would bring us to Mr. Arnott's. We arrived there just about sunset. Florence was playing on the green before the door with a little dog, which ran jumping and barking beside her, when the carriage swept round a turn of the road, which brought us in sight of the house.

Florence had travelled too much, and been, therefore, too much accustomed to new faces, to run away from us, even had we been strangers,—and we were not strangers, for she had seen us all

in the preceding summer, when her mother had made a visit of a few days in our neighborhood ; so, instead of running away, she called out, on seeing us, " Papa, mamma, here they come ! " and opening the gate, stood ready to receive us, with a face full of smiles.

Bed-time soon follows sunset in summer, at least for children. Yet it came not too soon this evening for Harriet and Mary, who were tired by their thirty miles travelling. But Florence thought it very unkind in them to leave her so soon " this first evening." Her entreaties were so urgent that they would stay a little while longer, that her young companions would have found some difficulty in getting away without aid from me. Taking Florence's hand, as she was endeavoring to hold Harriet and Mary back from following the servant, who was going to show them their bed, I said, " Did you hear me tell those little girls that they must go to bed ? "

" Yes," she replied ; " but they have been here

such a little time, and it is so early yet; I only want them to stay a little longer."

"I do not doubt they would try to oblige you, though they are tired and sleepy, but they are accustomed to do just as I wish them; and I wish them to go to bed at once. You will have a long summer's day for talk and play to-morrow, and only a short summer's night for sleep. So now bid them good-night; and I think you had better go too, for I shall call you up very early in the morning, as I expect you to show me the garden and the dairy before breakfast."

"And the fish-pond, too," said Florence, "the fish-pond, too."

"Is there a fish-pond, too? Well, all these will require us to rise early,—shall I bid you good-night, too?"

"Yes; I may as well go," said she, looking around and seeing that Harriet and Mary were already gone.

So closed the first evening of our visit.

## CHAPTER III.

## THE SWING.

THE morning was cloudless, and the garden looked beautifully, with its leaves and flowers glittering with dewdrops. But I only saw it from my window, for though Harriet and Mary, starting from sleep at the first sound of my voice, sprang eagerly up, and, dressing in haste, waited impatiently for the tap of Florence, which was to summon us to our morning walk; they waited in vain. Florence could not be awake, or when awake, could not be induced to rise; and breakfast was announced, and we were all seated at table before she made her appearance. She looked far more discontented and dull than those

whom she had disappointed. This did not surprise me, for I knew she could not feel very well pleased with herself; and those who are not, are seldom pleased with others.

“Well, Florence,” said her father, “so you have slept so long that your friends have lost this fine morning in waiting for you, and have seen nothing of all you promised last evening to show them.”

Florence colored, hung her head, and replied in rather a sulky tone, “I could not wake myself.”

“No,” said Mr. Arnott, “but—”

“Come, Mr. Arnott,” said I, interrupting him, “the disappointment is past—we have many other pleasures in store for to-day, we can afford to postpone this one; and I doubt not Florence will be ready in time to-morrow. To secure it I will call her myself. May I, Florence?”

She looked pleased, and replied promptly, “Yes, ma’am.”

I had two reasons for interrupting Mr. Arnott. One was, I thought Florence was already so much grieved and disappointed that it was useless to distress her farther. Another, and perhaps a more important reason was, that I wished to serve this little girl by helping her to correct her faults; and I felt that in order to be able to do this, it was quite necessary that she should learn to love me, to place confidence in my kindness, and take pleasure in my society. Now you will readily see that she would not be likely to do any of these things, if through me she were made to feel uncomfortable.

After breakfast, Mr. Arnott invited the children to take a walk with him, adding, "I have something to show you, which even Florence has not seen."

"Which I have not seen? What can it be? Do, papa, tell me what it is," said Florence, coming back from the door, which she had reached on her way for her bonnet.

"You will know in a few minutes," said Mr. Arnott, "that is, if you will put on your bonnet and come with me, instead of keeping us all waiting. See, Harriet and Mary are ready," pointing to them as they now entered the parlor.

Florence ran off for her bonnet, saying, however, as she went, "I will ask nurse—if she knows, I am sure she will tell me."

"She does not know," Mr. Arnott called out.

As I love pleasant surprises, especially when children are to enjoy the pleasure, this little mystery was a temptation to join the walkers too strong for me to resist, so before Florence came back, I was ready too, and went off as full of curiosity and pleased expectation as any of the party. Mr. Arnott led us through the garden into the orchard beyond it. As we entered the garden, Florence said, "Now I know what it is, papa—you are going to show us a new flower."

"Indeed, I am not, Florence."

As we passed into the orchard, she suddenly

exclaimed, "Now I have it, papa, now I have it; the cherries we were looking at the other day are ripe, and you are going to get us some."

Her father smiled, but said nothing.

"That is it, papa, is it not?"

"Wait a few minutes, Florence, and you will see."

"Well, I give it up, now, for we have passed all the cherry-trees."

Mr. Arnott turned towards a wood which skirted the orchard on the north, and long before we reached it the secret was told; for, on the stoutest branch of a magnificent oak, which he had, by removing his fence, enclosed within the orchard, hung a swing—a new and strongly made swing, with a very comfortable seat. We all quickened our pace as we came in sight of it, and many were the exclamations of admiration and delight from the children.

"Such a beautiful swing, under such a cool, shady tree, how delightful!"



Florence jumped, danced, clapped her hands, and at length darted off, and, bounding into the swing, called to her father, "Come quick, quick, papa, and swing me."

"After I have swung your friends, my dear."

Florence looked disappointed, and both Harriet and Mary drew back, saying, "Oh no, sir! Swing Florence first."

Mr. Arnott saw that to persist in his politeness would distress them, so saying, "I will swing you twelve times, Florence," he touched the swing, and away it rose, rapidly yet steadily, through the air, higher and higher each time, till, as Mr. Arnott counted twelve, Florence shrieked, half with fear and half with delight. Mr. Arnott caught the swing as it descended, and stopped it.

"Oh papa! is that twelve?"

"Yes, Florence; did you not hear me count?"

"Well, just once more, papa."

Mr. Arnott stooped and whispered to her—

she reddened, and getting down slowly, said, "Now, Harriet, you get in."

Harriet got in, and counting for herself, sprang out as the swing descended for the twelfth time. Mary had her turn, and looked so well pleased, that, had her father been in Mr. Arnott's place, she would, I doubt not, have said, like Florence, "Just once more, papa." As she came out Florence again sprang in.

"Now, papa, once, only once—or twice," she added, as her father extended his arm at her entreaty.

But after giving one toss to the swing, Mr. Arnott turned resolutely away, saying, "You are never satisfied, Florence, but I will not indulge you any farther this morning, for the sun is getting too warm for any of you to be here longer—in the cool of the evening we will try it again."

Florence looked not very well pleased, but as we all turned towards the house, she came out and followed us.

## CHAPTER IV.

## GIVING.

I do not intend to give you a history of what was done by the children each day of our visit, for this would make a very long story. When it was fine weather they helped the gardener, as *they* said, or hindered him, as *he* sometimes complained—walked in the orchard, looking for ripe fruit—or swung, and on a cool evening Mr. Arnott would sometimes take them out on the river in a pretty little sailing boat, or drive them two or three miles in a light, open carriage. When it rained, they overhauled Florence's toys, of which there were trunks full, or amused themselves with her books. They seemed to agree very well, at

least we heard of no disagreements, though I fancied, towards the latter part of our stay, that I sometimes saw a cloud on Mary's brow, but I asked no questions, and it passed off without any complaint.

One afternoon, when we had been there about a week, as Mr. and Mrs. Arnott and I were seated in the piazza enjoying the pleasant breeze, the children rushed in from the garden, seeming very anxious to give us some information, which, as each tried to speak louder than the others, it was quite impossible for some time for us to understand. At length, by hearing a little from each, we made out that there were ripe strawberries in the neighborhood—*really ripe*—for the gardener had seen them, and he said they were as large around as his thumb.

“And you want me to send for some,” Mr. Arnott began,—but, “Oh no, papa!” “Oh no, sir!” every voice again exclaimed, “we want to go for them.”

“Go for them!—and pray, young ladies, how will you go?—am I to drive you?”

“Oh no, papa! we want to walk; and Andrew”—this was the name of Mr. Arnott’s gardener—“says they will let us go into the garden and pick them ourselves—and you know, mamma, Eliza can go with us and carry our baskets,” added Florence, anticipating her mother’s objection to their going without some attendant to a place a mile off.

And so it was arranged, and in a few minutes they set out, Eliza carrying the baskets, and each taking a shilling to pay for her berries. It seems they had gone only about half-way, when they met a poor woman with a sick child in her arms, sitting to rest herself in the shade by the side of the road. The woman looked so pale and sad that the servant, Eliza, who was a kind-hearted girl, spoke to her, and asked what was the matter?

“Sick and weary,” said the poor woman.

“But how did you come to be in the road here by yourself?—and where are you going?” asked Florence.

“Why you see, Miss, I have been to the city, where a great many people told me that I might make twice as much money without slaving myself to death, as I was doing, for the children; and so I took this baby and went; but the baby fell sick, and indeed I think the city air did not suit either of us, for I fell sick too, and could not work at all, and I longed so to get home and smell the country air, and see the other children and friends’ faces, instead of strangers, strangers always, that, as soon as I could walk, I set out, and thank God, I have got only eight miles more to walk, for I live at M——.”

“But why do you walk?” asked the children.

“Ah, young ladies, poor folks that have not any money to pay for rides, must walk. As long as my money held out I got a ride on a

cart now and then for a sixpence or a shilling, and that was a great help; but I have not even a sixpence left now to buy a bit of bread if I was ever so hungry."

In a moment Harriet's shilling was in the poor woman's hand; Mary's followed. She burst into tears, and thanked them again and again. Florence looked at her shilling, then at the woman, and said, "I have half a dollar at home, and that is four times as much a shilling, you know, and if you will wait here till I have got the strawberries I am going for, you can go back with me and I will give you that."

"Thank you, my dear young lady," said the poor creature, "but I hope to get home this evening, and that I shall not do if I stop and go back on my way—yet," she added, "half a dollar is a great deal. I wish I were not so tired."

"Florence," cried Harriet and Mary, both at once, "I will go back for the money if you will

tell me where it is, and the poor woman can rest here till I come back."

"My good woman," said Eliza, "you are not fit to walk or even to ride eight miles to-night. Now our gardener's wife has a spare room in her house, and she is a kind woman, and will do everything she can to make you comfortable; and to-morrow morning, I dare say, the gardener can get you a lift on some farmer's cart all the way to M. So now, instead of waiting here, you had better go back at once, and Miss Florence can give you the half dollar when she comes home."

"Yes, I will give you the half dollar," said Florence, "and that," she repeated, turning to Mary, "is four times as much as a shilling, you know."

So it was arranged—the woman went back—the gardener's wife accommodated her—the gardener found a farmer going to M. the next morning, who promised to take her there on his cart—



and when Florence came home she gave her the half dollar, which being four times as much as a shilling, evidently made her, in her own opinion, and in Mary's too, four times as generous as Harriet or herself.

## CHAPTER V.

## GENEROSITY.

A FEW days after the events related in the last chapter, Mary came into my room to show me a basket and a doll's dress which Florence had given her. They were neither of them quite new, but they were not at all the worse for wear, and Mary was quite delighted with them, and with Florence for giving them. "Aunt Kitty, I do love Florence," said she, "she is so generous."

"Is she, my dear?" said I, in a very quiet tone.

"Why yes, Aunt Kitty, do you not see what she has given me?—and she has a book for Harriet, a very pretty book. which she means to give

her when she is going away,—and she gives away money; you know she gave half a dollar to that poor woman the other day.”

“All this, Mary, does not prove that Florence is generous.”

“Well, I do not see, Aunt Kitty, how anybody can be more generous than to give away their playthings, and their books, and their money.”

At this moment Harriet entered the room. Mary, from thinking that I was opposed to her in opinion, had become very much in earnest on the subject, and she called out, “I am very glad you are come, Harriet. Only think, Aunt Kitty does not think Florence is generous. Now Harriet, is she not generous—is she not very generous?”

“I do not know, Mary,—sometimes she is, but I did not think she was the other day, when she would not give her ripe plum to that poor sick child who wanted it so much.”

Mary colored; "But, Harriet, I am sure the wooden horse she gave him was worth more than a dozen plums."

"I dare say it was, Mary, but the child did not want that."

Mary became now a little angry, as she was apt to do when she could not convince those with whom she was arguing.

"Well, Harriet, I think it is very unkind in you to speak so of Florence, and to say she is not generous, when she thinks so much of you."

"Stop, stop, Mary," said I, "you are now as unjust to Harriet as you accuse her of being to Florence. She did not say that Florence was not generous, but only that she had not made up her mind on that subject, that she had not seen enough to convince her that she was; and this, remember, was all which I said. Florence may be as generous as you think her, but you have not told me enough to convince me of it. When we have known her longer we shall all be able to

judge better what she is. In the mean time I am very glad you like her, for I am very much interested in her myself."

"Well, Aunt Kitty, I do like her," said Mary, in a very energetic manner; "and I am sure I shall never be any better able to judge her than I am now."

I made no reply, and the conversation ended.

Mary did not forget it, however, nor feel quite satisfied with its termination; for the next morning, as I was sitting in my room alone, she came in, and after moving about a little while, seated herself by me and said, "Aunt Kitty, I want to ask you a question."

"Well, my dear, what is it?"

"I want to know when you do think a person is generous?"

"A person is generous, Mary, when he gives up his own gratification or advantage for the gratification or advantage of another."

"Well, that was what I always thought, Aunt

Kitty—and now I am sure a little girl does that when she gives away her books and her playthings, and her money, does she not?”

“When a little girl becomes tired of books and playthings, Mary, they cease to amuse her, do they not?”

“Yes, Aunt Kitty,” said Mary, “if she get tired of them,—but I never get tired of books and playthings if they are pretty.”

“Perhaps you may not, my dear,” I replied, “but some other little girls do, and those little girls are most apt to do so who have the greatest number of such things. Now, should they give away those of which they are tired—which had ceased to amuse them—could you say they had given up a gratification?”

“No, Aunt Kitty,” said Mary, speaking very slowly, for she was beginning to understand my meaning.

“Then this would not be what we mean by being generous?”

“No, Aunt Kitty,—but money—you know nobody gets tired of money—suppose a little girl gives *that*.”

“Well, Mary, suppose she gives money, and that she knows when giving it that some kind friend will replace it, or indeed, give her a yet larger sum to encourage what he thinks a good feeling—could you say she had *given up* a gratification—would this prove her to be very generous?”

As I asked this question I looked in Mary’s face with a smile,—the smile she gave me in return was plainly forced.

After waiting a moment, during which she seemed to be thinking very deeply, she spoke again. “Well, Aunt Kitty, but suppose she is not tired of the books and playthings, and does not expect to get the money back?”

Mary felt quite sure of her ground now, and looked steadily in my face. “Then, Mary, she would be a generous girl, provided she did not

expect to receive in exchange for her gift some other *selfish* gratification or advantage which she valued yet more highly."

Again Mary was silent and thoughtful for a while, then said, "Why, Aunt Kitty, I heard my father say once, when he gave some money to help some poor sick soldiers, that it was a great gratification to him; did that make him not generous?"

"No, no, Mary, for that was not a *selfish* gratification. That gratification was caused by the good which he knew the money would do them,—but if your father had given it for the praise which he expected to receive for so doing, or if he had done it to please persons from whom he hoped afterwards to receive some other favor in return—would he have been generous, do you think?"

"No, Aunt Kitty," said Mary, promptly.

"I think, Mary, you are now beginning to understand fully what generosity is. Remember, to be generous, you must not only give up some-



thing—but it must be something you value—something which is a gratification or advantage to you—and you must give it up for the gratification or advantage of another. Ignorant or thoughtless people sometimes call a person generous because he is careless of money, and throws it away on foolish, useless things; do you think him so?”

“No, Aunt Kitty.”

“And why not, my dear?” Mary hesitated. “I have been teaching you a useful lesson, Mary,” said I, “and I would see if you have learned it well,—tell me, then, why you would not think such a person generous.”

“Because, Aunt Kitty, what he gives up is not for the gratification or advantage of another.”

“Right, my love, you have learned your lesson well, and will, I hope, often put it in practice.”

At this moment, Harriet put her head into the room, calling out, “Mary, do come and see how Florence has dressed up Rover.”

Rover was the name of a dog which had been lately given to Florence, and which was a great pet with her. Away ran Mary—all her grave thoughts quite forgotten for the present.

## CHAPTER VI.

## PARTING SCENES.

THOUGH Mrs. Arnott's health was, as I have said, so much improved that she now hoped to be able to remain through the winter at her own home, Mr. Arnott was desirous that she should spend some weeks of the summer at the warm springs of Virginia, from the waters of which she had always seemed to derive great benefit. Mrs. Arnott was quite willing to do anything by which she might hope that her health would continue to improve, but she acknowledged to me that the idea of taking Florence there distressed her.

"Since I have been at home," she said, "and have been able to observe closely my child's

habits and temper, I see much reason to fear that she has already suffered greatly from the careless indulgence which can scarcely be avoided when we are always surrounded by strangers. She is now almost eleven years old, and I feel there is no time to be lost in endeavoring to correct the faults of her character, and that this can only be done by a degree of watchfulness, and of steady, yet gentle control, which I know from experience it is impossible to exercise either in travelling or at a crowded watering-place."

"Why should you take Florence with you?" I asked.

"What else can I do with her?"

"Send her home with me. You will not be gone, Mr. Arnott says, more than six weeks. For an object so important as your child's improvement, you will not, I am sure, my dear friend, hesitate to separate yourself from her for so short a time. You know nothing pleases me more than to surround myself with children; and though I ac-

knowledge there is no teacher like a mother, when the choice lies between a mother at a watering-place, and—”

“There is no room to hesitate,” said Mrs. Arnott, interrupting me: “I should rejoice to have Florence with you even were I to remain at home; and if I can win her consent, your invitation will be gladly and thankfully accepted, for of her father’s wishes I have not a doubt.”

“Well,” said I, “you will remember that I leave you in two days, so that you have little time to lose in deciding.”

“To-morrow,” said Mrs. Arnott, “to-morrow I will speak to Florence; then if she give her consent, there will be no time for change.”

The morrow came, and when I met Mr. Arnott, he said to me in a low voice, which was unheard by any other person, “I am very much obliged to you for your offer to relieve us and benefit our little daughter, for a great benefit I am sure it will be to Florence to be placed with

other children, and under what I know will be your kind and gentle, yet firm influence."

Mrs. Arnott looked pale and sad, and complained of a bad headache. As I saw her look tenderly at Florence, and heard how her voice softened in speaking to her, I knew what caused both her headache and her paleness. It was the thought of parting with her child for the first time in her life. The separation would, I knew, be very painful to this fond mother; but I also knew that she would willingly bear the pain to herself, for the advantage which she hoped Florence would derive from it.

After breakfast, Mrs. Arnott and I passed into another room, where we had been accustomed to spend the morning, because it was at that time of the day shaded and cool. We had scarcely entered when the three children passed the window near which we sat. They seemed very merry, amusing themselves with the wonderful but awk-

ward efforts made by Rover to catch an elastic ball that Florence was tossing up.

Mrs. Arnott called Florence.

“What is it, mamma?” said she, scarcely stopping from her play long enough to look around.

“Come here, my daughter, I have something to say to you.”

Florence came to the window.

“No, Florence, you must come in, I want to talk to you a little.”

For a moment Florence’s countenance was clouded; but it was only for a moment, when, laughing, she cried out, “Here, Rover, here, sir—come in with me, Rover, for mamma wants to talk to me, and while she is talking you can be playing ball,”—and she came racing in, Rover at her heels, and Harriet and Mary following to see the fun.

Mrs. Arnott pressed her hand to her forehead, and I saw that all this uproar increased her head-

ache, but it was impossible for several seconds to make the children hear us. At length I succeeded in silencing Harriet and Mary, and in making Florence understand that the noise gave her mother pain, and that she had better send Rover out.

“Does mamma’s head ache?” she said; “I am sorry for it—but just see Rover, mamma, try to catch this ball—just see him once—do, mamma—that can’t hurt you, I am sure, and it is so funny.”

Before I could remonstrate, or Mrs. Arnott could refuse, if she intended to refuse, the ball was thrown. Again Rover, who had been watching every movement of Florence, was barking, leaping, and turning somersets in the air; and again the children were laughing, Florence as loudly as ever, and Harriet and Mary with quite as much enjoyment, though a little less noise. As I found speaking of little use, I stepped up quietly to the merry group, and, catching the ball



as it rebounded from the floor, put a stop at once to their mirth and Rover's efforts.

"Now, my dear," said I to Florence, "your mother wants to speak a few words to you, so sit down quietly by her while I take Rover out, for she is in too much pain to be amused by him."

Florence looked surprised, and for a moment not very well pleased, but as she found that I spoke gently and pleasantly to the dog, and praised his beauty, while he ran good-humoredly by my side, rubbing his curly head against me, her countenance brightened, and she seated herself without any objection. I beckoned to Harriet and Mary to follow me, and when we were out of the room, I gave Rover and the ball into their charge. Telling them to wait in the piazza for Florence, and obtaining from them a promise that they would be very quiet, I returned. I had left the door of the room open, and as I reached it, I heard Florence say, "Oh no, mamma! I had a great deal rather go to the Springs with you and

papa." At this moment she heard my step, and turning, looked quite confused as her eye met mine.

"Do not be ashamed, Florence," said I, "that I should have heard you. I should be sorry if you did not love your papa and mamma well enough to prefer their company to mine; but I hope you love them so well that you will do cheerfully what is not quite so pleasant to yourself, when you are told that it will please them." Florence hung her head, looked very grave, and said nothing. "Speak, Florence," said I, "would you not be willing, for your mother's sake, to do what might not be very pleasant to yourself?"

After a little hesitation, Florence, without raising her head, said in a dissatisfied tone, "I don't see what good it could do mamma for me to go where I do not want to go."

I would have told Florence of her mother's delicate health, and of how much more benefit she would probably receive from travelling if she

could be free from care ; but Mrs. Arnott, seeming to think there was little hope of influencing Florence in this way, interrupted me, saying, "But, my love, why should you not wish to go home with Harriet and Mary ? You know how much you enjoyed your visit of two or three days to them last summer,—and Harriet has since then got a pony—you might ride on horseback if you went now."

"Will she let me ride him ?" asked Florence, looking up at me with sudden animation.

"I am sure she will," I replied.

"And may I carry Rover ?"

"Yes."

"Well, then, I will go, for I should like to ride on horseback ; and then, mamma, I'll have Rover with me, and how odd it will be to see him jumping up and trying to get to me on the horse, just as he tried to-day to catch the ball," and she laughed out, and was again all smiles and good-humor.

The consent of Florence having been obtained, the preparations for her visit were soon completed, and as we set out before the sun had risen on the following morning, there was, as Mrs. Arnott had said, no time for her to change her mind.

Florence could not but love her kind and gentle mother dearly, and I did not wonder to see the tears start as she bade her good-by; but Rover was to be looked after—the wild-flowers with which the road was lined were to be admired—the rising sun was to be seen—and amidst all these, Florence soon forgot to be sad.

## CHAPTER VII.

## CHANGES.

I HAVE nothing strange to tell you of our journey. Mary's father and mother were expecting us, and we arrived in time to take tea with them, sending the carriage home with our trunks. After tea, I walked home with Harriet and Florence, while Rover gambolled along as gayly as if he had had no travelling that day.

The next morning there was no difficulty in getting Florence up, for she was so impatient to mount the pony, that I could scarcely persuade her to wait till I was dressed and able to go with her and witness her first lesson in horsemanship. Pony was so gentle that I felt there was little

danger in trusting her on him, and so delighted was she with her new amusement, that she rode wherever she went, and I think Harriet was only twice on horseback during her visit, and one of these rides was not taken for her own pleasure. They seldom went out without me, but one morning when I was very much engaged, Mary came over to say, that her governess having gone on a visit to a sick friend, from which she would not return for two days, her mother had given her permission to invite her young friends in the neighborhood to spend the next day with her, and as she was going this morning to give her invitations herself, she wished Florence and Harriet to go with her. Florence was quite ready to go, provided she could ride; so pony was saddled, and as I knew where they were going, and felt there was really no danger in the way, I allowed them to go without me, sending with them, however, a servant whom I knew to be careful and discreet. Gay, laughing and chatting, they set

out. The farthest house to which Mary intended extending her invitations was only three-quarters of a mile distant, yet as she had several calls to make, I did not expect them to return under an hour and a half, or perhaps two hours. Greatly surprised was I, therefore, when in about half an hour I heard tones which seemed to me very like Mary's, but not gay and laughing, as I had last heard them. Then came a few words from Florence, and there was no mistaking the fact, that her voice was decidedly sulky. Mary was already in the piazza, when laying aside my work, I approached the window. Harriet was not with her, nor was Florence in sight. With some alarm I inquired, "Where are Harriet and Florence?"

"Florence has rode to the stable, and Harriet has gone for the doctor," Mary replied.

"The doctor!" I exclaimed, still more alarmed; "for whom? Is anything the matter with Harriet?"

"No, but Mrs. O'Donnel's baby is ill—oh! so

ill, Aunt Kitty!—and Harriet has gone for the doctor, and Margaret has stayed with the baby, and sent me back to beg you to go there.”

Confused as Mary’s account was, it was clear enough that aid was wanted, and without waiting to ask any further questions, I set out, taking with me such simple medicines as I thought might be useful, if I should arrive before the doctor. As I left the parlor Mary followed me, and begged very earnestly to be allowed to go with me and carry some of my vials.

“But Florence, Mary, would you leave her alone?”

“I do not believe Florence cares to have me stay with her, Aunt Kitty, and I am sure I do not wish to stay,” said Mary, coloring.

I remembered the angry tones I had heard, and thought it was perhaps wisest not to leave these children together while they were so evidently out of temper, so returning to the parlor,



where Florence had just made her appearance, I asked her if she would like to go with me.

“No,” she replied; “I am tired.”

“Then, my dear, rest yourself on the sofa a while, and when you get up, look in that closet and you will find some peaches. Mary is going with me, but I will send Harriet to you as soon as I see her.”

“I do not want Harriet or Mary either,” said Florence, impatiently.

I soon found that I had not left all the ill-humor behind when I left Florence, for we were scarcely down the steps before Mary expressed her conviction, that “there never was such another selfish girl as Florence Arnott.”

“Mary,” said I, “I once told you that you were hasty in pronouncing Florence to be very generous; but that was not so blameable as your present condemnation of her, whatever she may have done. It may be unwise to be ready to praise so highly on the acquaintance of a few

days, but it is unamiable to blame so severely for a single fault."

"But, Aunt Kitty, it is not a single fault. I have been thinking a long time, almost ever since you told me what made a person generous, that Florence was not so generous as I thought at first; but I do think anybody that would rather a poor little baby should die than to lose a ride for themselves, is very selfish, very selfish indeed," repeated Mary, with great emphasis.—"And now, Aunt Kitty," she continued, "I will tell you how it was, and then you will see if I am not right."

"Stop, my dear Mary," said I, as she was about to commence her story, "you are just now very angry with Florence, and would not therefore be a fair witness in the case. I had rather hear from some one else how it was."

"Why, Aunt Kitty," said Mary, with a very proud look, "you do not think I would tell you a story, I hope?"

"No, my love, I am sure you would tell me

nothing which you did not believe to be true ; but anger makes the words and looks, and even the actions of people, appear to us very unlike what they really are. However, you have no time to tell me anything, even if I wished it, for here we are at Mrs. O'Donnel's."

My readers may not be as unwilling as I was to hear what Mary had to say, so I will tell them what I afterwards heard of the morning's adventures from Margaret and Harriet, as soon as I have given them some account of Mrs. O'Donnel and her baby.

## CHAPTER VIII.

## A MOTHER AND CHILD.

THE little cabin, for it was nothing more, in which Mrs. O'Donnel lived, had been put up only a few months. It was built in a little wood which skirted the road between my house and the village, and stood so near the road that the traveller, as he passed along, could hear the baby who lived there, crying, or the song with which his young mother was hushing him to sleep. She was a very young mother; and there she lived, you might almost say, with no one but her baby—for Pat O'Donnel, her husband, was one of the hands on board a steamboat which went from our village to H—— every morning and returned in the even-

ing, and though he was always at home at night, he was away every day except Sunday, from day-dawn till dark. He had built this cabin, and brought his young wife and his baby son to live there, that he might spend every night with them.

I know nothing more of these people than I have now told you, when the circumstances occurred which I am about to relate, except that Mrs. O'Donnel worked very industriously in a little garden which had been fenced in for her near her cabin, and that on Sunday, the husband and wife, with their bright-eyed boy, might be seen going to church, looking clean, and healthy, and happy. But Harriet had become better acquainted with the family than I, for she loved children, and could never pass little Jem—this was the name of the baby—without a smile or a pleasant word, and the child soon learned to know her; and when she came near, would jump and spring in his mother's arms, give her back smile for smile, and since he could not talk yet, would

crow to her words. The mother was pleased with the notice taken of her boy, and whenever we passed the house, would bring him to the low fence nearest the road, and with a courtesy, and "How d'ye do, ma'am?" to me, would hold him to Harriet to kiss, sometimes putting in his hand a bunch of flowers for his young friend, who seldom left home to walk in that direction without taking some present for him. Even when setting out with Mary to deliver her invitations, little Jem had not been forgotten; and when I saw Harriet saving the largest of two peaches I had given her, and putting it in a little basket which she carried in her hand, I well knew that it would go no farther than to Mrs. O'Donnel's cabin. Accordingly, when she came in sight of it, she quickened her pace, saying to her companions, "I want to stop at Mrs. O'Donnel's a minute, so I will run on; and if you do not go too fast, I will be with you again before you have passed there."

Before she reached the house, she called out

for little Jem, and wondered that neither his laugh nor his mother's pleasant voice answered her. She would have thought they were not at home, but the door was open, and Mrs. O'Donnel was too careful to leave it so, when she was far away. Unlatching the little gate which opened on the road, she crossed the yard and entered the house. There sat Mrs. O'Donnel, her hands clasped in an agony of grief, and tears washing her face, and falling unheeded on that of her poor boy, who lay extended on her lap, no longer laughing and crowing, but pale and still, with his eyes half closed.

Harriet's exclamation of, "What is the matter, Mrs. O'Donnel?" roused the poor mother, who, looking up, said, "Oh, Miss, and glad am I you're come, for my poor baby loved you, and you're just in time to see him die."

"Oh! I hope not, Mrs. O'Donnel," said Harriet. "He will not die. Do you think he will?" she added, more doubtingly, as again she looked

in his pale face, and kneeling down by him, took the little hand which lay so feebly by his side.

“And indeed, Miss, I fear he will die,” said the poor woman. “All yesterday I saw he was not well, and grieved was I to see Pat going this morning, and leaving me with him all alone—but Pat laughed at me for a coward, and when I heard him laugh, I took heart and thought it was all my foolishness—but ah, Miss! it isn’t laughing he’ll do when he comes home the night;” and at the thought of her husband’s sorrow, Mrs. O’Donnel sobbed aloud. Soon recovering herself, she continued: “I saw Pat off, and when he was out of sight I came back, and looked at my baby as he lay asleep. It was daylight then, and I saw he had a beautiful color. Now I know the color was just the fever burning him up, but then I thought he was better, and I was so glad that I couldn’t help singing, though I did it softly for fear of waking him; and little was the work I did, going back again and again to the bed to see my pretty



baby looking so well—and at last I stooped down to kiss him, and whether I woke him, Miss, I don't know, but all at once he opened his eyes wide and stared at me, and he doubled his fists and stretched himself out, and made such a noise in the throat, that it was dying I thought he was just then—and I screamed and cried, but there was nobody to hear me, and soon he stopped making the noise and shut his eyes again, and ever since he has lain still, just like this."

Any one who has seen a child in convulsions, will know what had been the matter with little Jem; but Harriet knew nothing about it, and you may suppose her dismay, when, as she was looking at her little playfellow, a spasm crossed his face, his head was thrown back, his limbs stiffened, and that distressing noise in the throat was again heard. The mother shrieked, and Harriet, rushing to the door, screamed to Margaret, who, with Florence and Mary, was waiting in the road for her, that little Jem was dying.

Margaret was a good nurse, and one of those useful people who think more of helping those who suffer, than of mourning over them. As soon as she entered the house, she saw what was the matter, and saw, too, the very thing which she most needed,—a large pot of water, under which Mrs. O'Donnel had made a fire before she became alarmed about her child. In another minute, she had drawn a tub from under a table, poured into it the hot water from the pot, cooled it to the proper temperature, by the addition of some from a pail which stood near, and before Mrs. O'Donnel at all understood her proceedings, her child was stripped and laid in a warm bath.

As the convulsion passed off, Margaret said, “Now, Mrs. O'Donnel, your child is coming to, and you must not be so frightened, for I have seen many a child have fits, and be just as well as ever afterwards; but you must be very quiet, ma'am, for if he goes to sleep afterwards he ought not to be woke; and, Miss Harriet, you cannot

do any good crying here, but if you will get on pony and ride for the doctor as fast as you can, you will be doing a great deal of good, and Miss Mary had better go back and tell her aunt."

In an instant Harriet was by the side of the pony, urging Florence to get off, that she might mount and go for the doctor. But to this arrangement Florence strongly objected. My readers must not be too angry with her, they must remember she had not seen the child, and did not know how very important even a few minutes might be in such a case as his. Still, it must be confessed, she thought more of herself than of any one else, as she replied to Harriet's entreaties, "Why cannot I go for the doctor? I can carry a message just as well as you."

"But, Florence, you do not know where the doctor lives."

"Well, you can go with me and show me."

"Florence, I cannot walk as fast as the pony

can go. Do, Florence, come down and let me have him."

Florence did not stir, and Harriet wrung her hands with impatience, as, turning to the door, she called out, "Margaret, Florence will not let me have the pony."

Margaret came out, but neither her remonstrances, nor Harriet's entreaties, nor the reproaches of Mary, had any effect upon Florence. Indeed, Mary's reproaches probably only strengthened her resolution, as it is not by making people angry that we induce them to yield their wishes to ours. Some minutes were lost in this useless contest, when Harriet said, "Margaret, I will not wait any longer, I will walk as fast as I can, and if the doctor is only at home he will soon be here."

When Mary and I arrived at Mrs. O'Donnel's, neither the doctor nor Harriet had yet made their appearance. I did for the poor baby all I could venture to do without a physician's advice, and

then watched with much anxiety for Dr. Franks. I had been there probably half an hour, when Harriet came in, flushed and panting. "Where is the doctor?" was the first question.

"He will soon be here," she replied; "I am sure he will, for Mrs. Franks knew where he was, and she sent off a boy on horseback for him."

Harriet looked so heated, that, fearing the effect of further excitement on her, I determined to return home immediately. So, giving Margaret some directions, and telling Mrs. O'Donnel that I would see her again in the afternoon, I left them.

## CHAPTER IX.

## REPENTANCE.

WE walked home quite slowly, on Harriet's account. We had been so long away that Florence would, I thought, have become quite tired of loneliness and ill-humor, and quite prepared to welcome us with cheerful, friendly smiles; indeed I should not have been greatly surprised to meet her on the way, or at least to see her in the piazza watching for us. But we reached the house—entered the piazza—passed into the parlor, and still no Florence was seen. I called her, but she did not answer, and a servant told me she thought Miss Florence had gone to lie down, as she had told her that she was sick, and did not want any

dinner. I went to her room immediately, and found her asleep. She had evidently been weeping, for her face was flushed, her eyelids red and swollen, and as I stood by her, she sobbed heavily more than once. Harriet had stolen in after me without my seeing her, and as I turned to darken a window, the light from which shone directly on Florence, she looked anxiously in my face, and asked in a whisper, "Is she very sick, Aunt Kitty?"

I did not like to tell Harriet that I thought Florence more sulky than sick, so I only replied, "I hope not, my dear. She has cried herself to sleep, and if awoke now, will probably have a headache, so we will let her sleep on."

When we had dined, Mary prepared to return home. Harriet had quite recovered from her fatigue, and I proposed that she should go home with Mary and spend the afternoon. She hesitated at this for a little while, and then said, "I

had rather go to Mrs. O'Donnel's with you, Aunt Kitty."

"But, Harriet, I would rather you should go to your uncle's."

Seeing she still lingered by me, and looked dissatisfied, I added, "I have a very good reason for my wish, Harriet, which, if I should tell it to you, would, I am sure, make you go cheerfully; but I would rather you should trust me, and do what I ask without hearing my reason. Can you not?"

She readily answered, "Yes," and getting her bonnet, only stopped to ask that I would let her know how little Jem was as soon as I came back. This I promised, and she and Mary set out.

It was on account of Florence that I had sent Harriet away. I had at first been interested in this little girl for her mother's sake, but I had now become much attached to her and deeply interested in her for her own sake. She was naturally a child of quick feelings and warm affec-



tions, and I could not see her anxiety to please me, her loving remembrance of her father and mother, her constant solicitude about them, and her delight at hearing of them, without regarding her tenderly, and earnestly desiring to see that one fault removed, which was daily acquiring strength, and which would in time destroy all that was pleasing or amiable in her character. For this one fault, which I am sure I need not tell my readers was selfishness, I found too, more excuse in the circumstances of Florence, than I could have found in those of most children. She was an only child, and her fond father and mother had always so plainly shown that they considered her the first object in life, and thought that everything should yield to her wishes, that Florence is perhaps scarcely very much to blame for having learned to think so too. I had long wished for an opportunity to show Florence her own selfishness and its great evil, and as Margaret had, while I was at Mrs. O'Donnel's, told me what she

knew of the morning's adventures, I believed that this opportunity I had now found. That Mary had spoken the truth to Florence on this subject, I did not doubt; but I was as sure that this truth had been spoken, not in love, but in anger, and this never profits any one. I did not think it would be necessary for me to speak at all, for I thought Florence had now prepared for herself a lesson which would tell her all I wished her to know, far more forcibly than any words of mine could do. What this lesson was, how I induced Florence to look at it, and what were its effects on her, you shall now hear.

When Florence awoke, I was sitting by her bedside, and I met her first glance with a pleasant smile. She cast a wondering look around her, and again resting her eyes on me, asked, "Where is Harriet?"

"Gone home with Mary," I replied; "and I want you to make a visit and take a drive with me,—so get up, lazy one, and when you have

washed your face and brushed your hair, come to the parlor, and you shall have some dinner."

As I spoke, I playfully lifted Florence from the bed, and placed her standing on the floor, and before she had time to ask any farther questions, or make any objections, I was gone. When she came out, I had such a dinner prepared for her, as I knew would best please her taste, and near it stood a small basket filled with choice fruit. Florence was hungry, and said little till she had finished her dinner. She then asked where I was going.

"I am going to take a drive to a farmer's about four miles off, who has the best cherries in the neighborhood,—but first, I am going to Mrs. O'Donnel's to see her sick baby, and I want you to go with me, and help me take her some things which I think may be of use to him."

While speaking, I laid a small bundle on the table by Florence. She looked at the bundle, then at me, and then down on the floor. At

last she spoke, "I do not want to go to Mrs. O'Donnel's."

"Do not want to go to Mrs. O'Donnel's! I am very sorry for that, for I must take these things to the baby. But why do you not wish to go?"

"Mary called me selfish this morning, and—and—I do not want to go there."

"Mary called you selfish! I will not ask you why she did so, because, as I would not let her tell me your quarrels, I must not be partial and hear them from you; but surely to refuse to do a kind action to a sick baby, is not the best way to convince her that she was unjust." I saw that Florence hesitated, and pursuing my purpose, said, "Come, put on your bonnet, and do not let Mary's petulance prevent your doing right, and deprive me of my companion."

As she had no objection to make, Florence put on her bonnet, took up the bundle, and followed me, though I could see it was with inward re-

luctance. During our walk I spoke to her cheerfully and pleasantly, leaving her but little time for thought.

When we came in sight of the house, she became grave and silent. I, too, ceased talking. I held Florence's hand, and, as we approached the door, I could feel that she drew back; but I took no notice of her efforts, and she entered with me into the presence, to all appearance, of the dying. Florence had never before stood by the side of one so ill; and to see the pretty, laughing baby, with whom she had played so gayly but a few days since, lying so changed; to hear his deep, groaning breath; to see the poor mother, as she sat, shedding no tear, making no moan, but gazing on her child with a hopeless agony which none could mistake, was enough to cause her to turn pale and burst into tears; yet I thought it probable that Mary's angry speeches were now remembered, and that some of the bitterness of remorse was in the heart of Florence. No one

moved when we entered. Even Dr. Franks, who was there, remained seated, holding his watch in his hand, and occasionally making a sign to Margaret to give the child some medicine which stood on a table by her. I was myself overcome, for though I had expected to find the child ill, I had not been prepared for such apparent hopelessness in his case. Poor Florence! Her lesson was likely to be more severe than I had anticipated.

Seeing that I could do no good, feeling that I could speak no comfort there, I quietly laid down what I had brought on the floor beside Mrs. O'Donnel, and taking the hand of the weeping Florence, passed out. Dr. Franks followed me. I heard his step, and turning, when we were far enough from the door not to be heard within the house, I asked him whether he had any hope that the child would recover.

"Only that hope," he replied, "which we feel as long as there is life. He cannot long remain as he now is; if he recover at all, he will soon

show signs of being better. If I could have been called earlier, even half an hour earlier, before the child's strength had been so far exhausted, the case would have been comparatively simple, and easily relieved; but now—" and he shook his head despondingly.

Florence had looked up anxiously in Dr. Franks' face while he was speaking. She now dropped her head, covered her face with her hands, and sobbed loudly and violently. This caused the doctor to look at her, and that look probably reminded him of Harriet, for he said, "By the by, I never knew Harriet so thoughtless as in this business. Why, when she found I was not at home, did she not ride on for me herself, instead of waiting for a boy to catch and saddle another horse, a business of half an hour at least, all which time I was riding away from here, so that it made a difference of fully an hour in the time of my arriving. That hour would, in all probability, have saved the child."

Any excuse for Harriet would have seemed an accusation to poor Florence's excited mind, and I was silent; but as the doctor said, "That hour would in all probability have saved the child," her cries became so wild and distressing, that I moved with her farther from the house, while the doctor returned to his post.

"What is the matter, Florence?" said I; "why are you so much distressed? Is it because you fear the baby will die?"

"No, no, it's because I've killed him—oh! I've killed him," she repeated, with almost frantic vehemence; "the doctor says so; the doctor says if Harriet had rode he would have got well, and I would not let Harriet ride."

I never felt my own helplessness, my own littleness, and God's supreme power, so much as at this moment. Here was the very lesson which I had wished to teach Florence, which I had brought her there to learn, *the great evil of her selfishness*. I had wished her to see that pale,



suffering baby—to feel grieved—to be angry with herself, that for a trifling amusement she had been willing to prolong those sufferings, to lengthen out his mother's sorrow,—perhaps, to make the lesson more impressive, I would have been willing that Florence should feel for some minutes an apprehension that the disease would terminate fatally. But here was no vain apprehension; the child was, to all appearance, dying; his physician believed that he would die, and I felt that, if he did, Florence would always suffer from the conviction that she had caused his death. As I heard her frantic cries, and saw her agitated frame, I trembled for the consequences. I stood awed before that Almighty Being who was teaching me as well as her, the great sin of selfishness, the suffering which follows all sin, was teaching us that the only path of safety is that narrow path of right-doing which He has marked out for us, and that the slightest wandering from this path might lead to woes of which we had not even

dreamed. These are solemn lessons, which I hope my little readers will learn from the example of others, that they may never, like Florence, be taught them in their own persons.

In my fears for Florence I could find no comfort, but in the remembrance that God, her great Teacher, was also her loving Father. While I was standing beside her, unable to speak, striving, with mute caresses, to sooth her agony, with a sudden movement she looked up to me, exclaiming, "Oh! beg the doctor to make him well."

"The doctor, my dear Florence, cannot make him well; God only can do that."

"Well, beg God then."

"I will, dear Florence, and so may you, for He is as near to you as to me, and He hears the simplest prayer of the simplest child."

In an instant she was on her knees beside me, exclaiming, in the most imploring tones, "Oh, God! please to make the baby well,—oh! please to make him well."

Florence had often said her prayers, but this was probably the first time she had ever prayed from the heart. I stooped down to her, and said —“And please take this wicked selfishness from the heart of Florence, that she may not do such great wrong again, and bring such sorrow on herself and others.” She repeated my words slowly and solemnly, adding, “and oh ! please make the baby well,” and concluding her prayer with the sacred form to which she had been accustomed, “For Christ’s sake, Amen,” she rose up comparatively calm. Hers had been a prayer of such simple faith as none but a simple-hearted child, and those who, in the words of our Saviour, become as little children, can offer, and such prayer always brings consolation.

“Now, Aunt Kitty, let us go back to the house :” — seeing I hesitated, Florence added, “you need not be afraid that I will make any noise ; I will be very still. I only want to go where I can see him.”

The fear that Florence would make a noise had not been the cause of my hesitation. It was on her own account. I had wished Florence, as I have already said, to feel the evil of her selfishness; I did not wish her to forget the pain she had suffered and was suffering; I would not have driven away, if I could, the serious thoughts which were now in her mind; but her agitation had been so great as to make me very anxious, and I hesitated to take her back where she might be yet further excited. She appeared, however, so much in earnest in her wish, that, after a little consideration, I thought it wisest to indulge her, and we returned to the house. Florence seated herself on a low stool by Margaret, on whose lap the baby now lay, and watched him with scarcely less constancy than his mother. Her lips frequently moved, and I had no doubt that she was again asking God to make him well.

I will not weary you by telling you how long we watched there, or through what changes the

little sufferer passed. The sun was not yet set, when his symptoms were so materially amended that the doctor said to Mrs. O'Donnel, "Now, my good woman, be comforted; your child is better, and will, I hope, with care, soon be well."

The poor mother had uttered no sound for many hours, but now her long-smothered feelings burst out. With a wild cry she started up, and, holding out her arms, would have caught her child to her bosom; but the doctor, pushing her back into her seat, whispered, "Hush, hush—he is sensible now, and you may frighten him into another fit."

She hushed her cry in a moment, and remained quiet in her chair; but she burst into tears and wept piteously. As soon as she recovered her voice, she exclaimed, "God bless you, sir; God bless you all, for it's good you've been to me, watching by the poor, lone woman's child, as if he had been the rich man's son. And he will be better, you say, before Pat comes. Oh!

glad am I, poor fellow, that he didn't see him at the worst."

When I could look around for Florence, she had left the cabin. I went out and saw her standing by the carriage, which had been some time waiting for us. She was speaking eagerly to Henry, and as she turned to meet me, I saw that she looked much excited, though very happy. I found, too, that her head and hands were feverish to the touch, and I became very anxious to get her quietly home. When I proposed going, however, Florence replied, "Not yet," and turned towards the house.

I put my arm around her, and drawing her to me, said very seriously, "Florence, you asked God a little while ago to take away all selfishness from your heart. Do you remember it?"

"Yes," she immediately replied, "and I hope he will, now that He has made the baby well."

"I am sure He will, Florence, if you only

show that you were sincere in asking it, by watching your own feelings, and resisting your selfish inclinations."

"Well, so I will," said Florence.

"Then, my love, you will do now as I wish you. By remaining longer here you may make yourself sick from fatigue and excitement, and so, for the gratification of your own inclinations, give great pain to me and to all who love you. This would be selfish, would it not?"

"Yes," said Florence, "so it would, though I did not know it;" and she entered the carriage without further hesitation.

This was probably the first time that Florence had ever voluntarily yielded her own wishes to those of another—the first generous act she had ever performed. It may seem to my readers a very little thing, but I felt that Florence had resisted herself, had conquered herself, and this is never a little thing.

When we got home I sent the carriage on for

Harriet, and giving Florence her tea without any delay, went with her, early as it was, to her room, promising, if she went to bed at once, to sit with her till she slept. She had been accustomed by her mother to say her prayers aloud, and I was glad to hear, as I listened to her this evening, that she did not forget to thank God for making little Jem well. She was very much disposed to talk when she had lain down; but as I was desirous to keep her as quiet as possible, I told her that in the morning I would hear all she had to say, and that now I would tell her a story of her mother and myself when we were children. A story was what of all things Florence most liked to hear, so she was very attentive to me, and begged, when I had ended one, that I would tell her another. I took care that the second should not be very interesting, and before it was finished, Florence was in a sleep which, though at first disturbed and nervous, soon became quiet, and from which she did not awake till the sun was shining brightly on another day.



## CHAPTER X.

## A GOOD BEGINNING.

“WELL, Harriet,” said Dr. Franks, as he came into our breakfast room before we had risen from table, “I was half angry with you yesterday, when I thought you had ridden to my house and then turned back and sent a boy for me, instead of following me yourself. But my wife saved you a scolding by telling me you walked there. And now, Miss Simple, pray what was that for? Of what use is your pony if he cannot bring you for a doctor when a child is in convulsions?”

Harriet colored and looked confused, but Florence colored still more deeply. I saw that the

doctor expected an answer, and both the children looked at me to explain, but I would not interfere. The doctor seemed annoyed at our silence, and catching hold of Mary Mackay, who was just entering the parlor, he drew her forward, saying, "Why, Mary Wild," a name he had long given her, "could not have done a more thoughtless thing."

Low and hesitatingly, Florence spoke, "It was not Harriet's fault."

"It was not Harriet's fault!" the doctor impatiently repeated; "whose fault was it then, pray?"

"It was mine,"—the first difficulty conquered, Florence spoke more boldly—"It was mine. I was riding the pony, and would not let her have him."

I knew Dr. Franks well, and I saw that he was about to reply to this with a severity which, however Florence might have deserved it the day before, would then have been cruel; so before he

could speak, I drew her to me, and said, "Not a word of blame, doctor, for Florence has already said harder things to herself than you can say to her. Besides, you would have known nothing of it but for her, and she must not suffer for her truth-telling."

I was pleased with this little incident, for though Florence had only done justice to Harriet, selfishness often makes us unjust as well as ungenerous; and I knew to tell the truth as fully as she had done, must have given her great pain. I was glad, too, to find that Harriet and Mary both seemed to feel this, and were very cordial and pleasant in their manner to her afterwards.

The next afternoon we went to the farm where we were to find the best cherries in the neighborhood; and there Florence's new principle of action displayed itself frequently. She was evidently on the watch for opportunities to be generous. The best place under the trees, the finest cherries, for which she would once have striven, she now

pressed upon Harriet and Mary; and whenever she had thus conquered her former habits, she would turn her eyes to me with a timid appeal for my approval. But the act on which she evidently most valued herself, was, asking to return in the carriage, and so giving up the pony to Harriet, when we were going home.

It was but a few days after this that Mr. and Mrs. Arnott came for Florence, on their way home from the Virginia Springs. During these few days, she continued to manifest the same earnest desire to correct her faults. I told her father and mother of the interesting scenes through which she had passed, and of what seemed to be their happy result. Mrs. Arnott shed tears, and Mr. Arnott shook my hand repeatedly, declaring that I had done more for their happiness than I could conceive, if I had brought Florence to see and endeavor to correct this one great fault.

The evening before we parted, I had a conversation with Florence which interested me very

much. We were walking, and I had purposely taken the path which led by Mrs. O'Donnel's cabin. When we came in sight of it Mrs. O'Donnel was standing at the door with little Jem, now quite well, in her arms. We spoke to her as we passed, and then Florence said, "I shall always love little Jem, Aunt Kitty."

"Why, Florence?"

"Because, if it had not been for him I should not have found out what a selfish child I was, or have learned to be generous."

"And do you think you have learned to be generous, Florence?"

She colored and seemed confused for a moment, then looking up in my face said, with great simplicity, "I hope so. Do you not think I have?"

"I think you are learning, and learning very fast. It was fortunate, dear Florence, that you discovered the evil of your selfish habits while you were so young; but the habits even of ten

years are not to be broken in a day. You will often find it difficult to resist them. If you will write to me when you go away, and tell me all the difficulties and trials you meet in your efforts to conquer them, I may sometimes be able to help you. Will you do this? Will you write to me?"

"Write to you! oh! I shall like it,—at least I shall like to get your letters, and read mamma just as much as I choose of them."

"But you must remember, Florence, that my object in our correspondence will be to give you my aid in learning to be generous. That I may be able to do this, you must be very honest with me, and tell me whenever you have done, or even been tempted to do a selfish thing."

"May I not tell you, too, when I have been generous?"

"Certainly, my dear; tell me all you wish to tell me of yourself, I shall be glad to hear it all; but I hope you will soon feel that you have a great deal more to tell me of your selfishness, than of

your generosity." Florence looked at me in speechless surprise. "Because, Florence, I hope you will soon become really generous, generous *at heart*, and then those things which, now that you are only trying to be generous, it is hard for you to do, which you notice because they are done with a great effort, will be so easy and so common that you will forget to tell me about them—that you will not even notice them yourself."

"But how, when I get to be so generous, can I have any selfishness to write you about?"

"Ah, Florence! we are never quite free from selfishness, any of us, and the more generous we become, the more plainly do we see selfishness in acts and feelings which seemed to us quite free from it once. Do you not feel this yourself? Do not things seem selfish to you now, which only a week ago you did not think so at all?"

"Yes," said Florence, in a low voice, and then walked thoughtfully and silently by my side.

The next morning Florence returned home,

and I did not see her again for nearly eighteen months. But I heard from her often, for our correspondence commenced very soon. Her first letters were filled with her own generous acts,—how she had risen early when she was very sleepy, that she might not keep nurse waiting—how she had sat quite still almost all day, when she had wanted to run about very much, because mamma was not well, and would have been disturbed by noise—how she had given her cousin Mary her very prettiest book, because she said she liked it. But it was not long before Florence began to write of her grief for selfish feelings, which, to use her own language, “if she tried ever so hard to get rid of them, would come back.” Once or twice a letter came from her full of the bitterest shame and self-reproach for the selfishness of some action, which, a little while before, Florence would not have felt to be in the least degree wrong. I rejoiced at all this, for I saw it was as I hoped; Florence was becoming generous *at heart*—selfish-



ness was becoming a hateful thing to her, and a strange thing, which like other strange things, could not make its appearance without being noticed. I would copy some of these letters for you, but I have other things to tell you of Florence, which I think will interest you more than her letters.

## CHAPTER XI.

## A NEW CREATURE.

ALMOST eighteen months after Florence had left us, came that bright and beautiful winter's morning which I described to you at the commencement of this book. You may remember that on that morning I accompanied Harriet and Mary to Mr. Dickinson's to hear a play, which was to form part of their Christmas entertainments, and that on returning home, I found Mr. Arnott's carriage waiting for me. The driver brought a letter from Florence, begging me to come as soon as possible to her sick and sorrowing mother. The letter was short, and did not tell me what was the cause of Mrs. Arnott's distress. I immediately packed a

trunk, and sending Harriet home with Mary, prepared for my journey. It was one o'clock, however, before, with my utmost haste, I could set out, and the roads were so filled up with the snow of the previous night, that we travelled slowly, and I had gone little more than half way when the short winter's day was over. I therefore stopped all night at the same little inn where I had dined when going to Mr. Arnott's with Harriet and Mary. The next morning I was again on the road so early that I arrived at Mr. Arnott's before breakfast—indeed, before any of the family, except Florence, was up. She did not expect me so early, and I entered the house so quietly, that I stood in the parlor with her before she knew that I had arrived.

No one who had seen the face of Florence, as her eye rested on me, could have doubted her delight at seeing me; yet, surprised and delighted as she was, she made no exclamation, but coming close to me, put her arms around me, and kissing

me repeatedly, said, in a very low voice, almost a whisper, "How kind you were, Aunt Kitty, to come so quickly! We did not think you could be here before this evening."

In the same low tone I answered, "Your letter made me too anxious to admit of any unnecessary delay. But how is your mother now?"

"She will be better, I am sure, when she sees you, for I think it is agitation which has made mamma ill. She slept but little last night, and is asleep now, which makes me try to keep everything quiet."

While Florence was speaking, she was helping me to take off my cloak and bonnet. Then drawing a large rocking-chair before the fire, she seated me in it, and kneeling down by me, loosened the lacings of the moccasins which I had worn over my shoes in travelling, and took them off. Before she rose, she rested her head for a moment affectionately on my shoulder, and said,

“Aunt Kitty, I am very, very glad to see you again.”

Florence was gently changed in appearance as well as in manners, since we parted. She had left me, a child, looking even younger than Harriet, though, in reality, two years older; but a year and a half had passed, and she had grown so rapidly, that, though not yet thirteen, she might easily have passed for fourteen or fifteen. Her face, too, had changed. Florence had always been spoken of as a pretty child. I suppose she was so, for she had a fair, smooth skin, very dark, glossy, and curling hair, and fine eyes; yet her face never particularly pleased me, and even those who talked of her beauty, did not seem to care much about looking at her. But now there was a sweet thoughtfulness and peacefulness in her countenance, which made me turn my eyes again and again on her with increasing love. Not that I loved her for being beautiful, but for the serious and gentle spirit, which I was sure had given the

expression, of which I have spoken, to her countenance,—which would have given the same expression to the plainest features, and which I would advise all my little readers to cultivate, if they are desirous of beauty—that beauty which all admire most, and which nothing, not even old age or disease, can destroy.

But these changes in appearance were by no means the most important which I already saw in Florence. In every word and action I saw that she was thinking more of others than of herself. I have told you how quietly she received me, never forgetting, in her surprise at my unexpected appearance, that a loud exclamation from her might awaken and agitate her mother, while for my comfort she seemed equally considerate. My readers will, perhaps, think that these things were little worthy of notice, and gave slight proof of any great change of character in Florence—slight assurance that she had conquered her selfishness. But in this they are mistaken. It is precisely in

these little things which occur daily, hourly, in the life of each of us, that a generous nature shows itself most truly. A very selfish person may, on some rare occasion, make a great display of generosity,—may even be excited into doing a really generous action, but it is only the generous in heart who can be generous daily, hourly, in little as in great things, without excitement and without effort. Some of my young friends may have been accustomed to think themselves very generous, yet to keep their generosity, as fine ladies keep their diamonds, only to be exhibited on great occasions. Let me assure them that if it is not shown, too, in everyday life—in thoughtfulness of the feelings of others, readiness to yield their own gratifications for the advantage of others—it is no true diamond of generosity, but only some worthless imitation. Others, perhaps, have wished that they had opportunities of showing how generous they are. Let them now learn that they have such opportunities every day—

every hour. Whenever your parents call on you to do what is not agreeable to your inclinations, and you obey them cheerfully, pleasantly, instead of showing by your ill-humor, that you only do not disobey because you dare not, you are sacrificing your own inclination to promote their pleasure, and in so doing you are generous. Whenever you give up the plays you like best, the walks you most admire, and choose those which you know will give the greatest pleasure to your companions, you are generous. You will now be able to judge for yourselves of the alteration in Florence's character, from her conduct under the circumstances I am about to relate to you, and I need not, therefore, trouble you again with such long explanations.

Soon after my arrival, Florence left the parlor, saying she would go to the kitchen and tell them to bring up our breakfast, as she did not like to ring the bell, which was very loud. She returned in a few minutes, followed by a servant



with the breakfast tray. As we seated ourselves at table, I inquired for Mr. Arnott.

“He is asleep still,” said Florence. “He told me last night to call him before breakfast, so I went to his room just now to do it; but I knew he had been up a great deal with mamma last night, and he seemed to sleep so sweetly, that I just said, ‘Papa,’ very softly, and as he did not stir for that, I came out as quietly as I could.”

“So if I had not been here you would have breakfasted alone.”

“No—I should have waited for papa—it is so much pleasanter to breakfast with him.”

An early ride is a great quickener of the appetite. I was consequently somewhat longer than usual at the breakfast table, and before I had risen, Mr. Arnott appeared. After welcoming me very cordially, he kissed Florence, saying, however, as he did so, “You deserve to lose your kiss for not calling me this morning. You should

never break a promise, Florence, however trifling it may seem to you."

"I kept my promise, papa, and called you. Indeed I did," she added, as Mr. Arnott shook his head, "though I acknowledge I did it very softly."

"Ah, Florence! we are told of people who, only seeming to keep their promises, are said 'to keep the word of promise to the ear;' but you did not even keep yours to the ear, at least not to my ear, for I heard nothing of your call."

"But you believe I did call you, papa," said Florence, earnestly.

"Certainly, my daughter, I believe what you tell me, but I would have you remember that promises should be kept in the sense in which they are made, and that, though it should be at some inconvenience to ourselves."

"I will remember it, papa, but it was *your* inconvenience I was thinking of, when I did not awake you," said Florence, smiling.

"I do not doubt that," said her father.

While Mr. Arnott and I were conversing, Florence was called out of the parlor, and as soon as the door closed on her, he interrupted some observation he was making on the state of the roads, to say, "I am truly obliged to you for coming so quickly, for it is necessary that I should leave home immediately on very important business, which I will more fully explain to you before I go; yet I have not been willing even to announce my intention of going, till my poor wife could have the support of your presence."

When Florence returned, Mr. Arnott asked, "Where is Rover, that he does not come to share my breakfast this morning?"

"Why, is my old friend Rover still alive?" said I; "I wonder he has not been here to welcome me."

"He would have been, I dare say, Aunt Kitty, for Rover never forgets his friends, but he is three miles away from here now," and in spite

of Florence's efforts to speak carelessly, her voice trembled.

"Three miles away from here! What do you mean, Florence?" said Mr. Arnott.

"Just what I said, papa. Edward Morton lives three miles away, does he not? Rover belongs to him now."

Florence spoke very fast, and turned her face away from her father, so that he did not see, as I did, that her lip was quivering, and her eyes were full of tears.

"Why, Florence, I am surprised at you. I would not have believed it possible that you could part with Rover to any one. I thought you loved him almost as well as he loved you."

Mr. Arnott spoke almost angrily at this proof, as he thought it, of want of kindness in his daughter for her old playfellow. Florence, unable longer to control herself, burst into tears, and sobbing, said, "So I do, papa, love Rover just as well as he loves me, and yet I do not feel sorry he

is gone, for nurse said he kept mamma awake at night barking under her window; and you know we could not keep him out of her room in the day, and when she was nervous and in pain, I saw it worried her to have him there."

Mr. Arnott's eyes glistened as he drew his daughter to him, and kissed and soothed her. I remembered the scene with Rover and the ball during my last visit to Mrs. Arnott, and, I dare say, my readers will remember it too. After a while Mr. Arnott said, "Well, Florence, it was very right in you to think of your mother's comfort, and I suppose I must reconcile myself to parting with Rover for a time—but only *for a time*, Florence; when your mother gets well, Edward, I doubt not, will give him back to you."

"Perhaps he would, papa, but—" Florence hesitated, looked in her father's face, colored, and looked down again.

"But what, Florence? Surely you would like to have Rover back."

“To be sure, I would, papa, but I thought a great deal about it before I gave Rover away, and I chose Edward Morton to give him to, because I knew he would love Rover and take good care of him; and do you think, papa, it would be right, after Edward gets to love him almost as well as I do, to ask him to give him up?”

“No, my daughter, it would not be right. You have thought very justly.”

I could not help adding, “And very generously too.”

Florence colored with pleasure at our approbation; but Mrs. Arnott’s bell rang, and she left us at once to inform her mother of my arrival.

## CHAPTER XII.

## CLOUDS AND SUNSHINE.

MATTERS of business are never, I think, very interesting to young persons. I will not, therefore, attempt to give you a very particular account of the circumstances from which Mr. Arnott's present perplexities and his wife's sorrowful anticipations arose. All that is necessary for you to know, is soon told.

Mr. Arnott had some years before placed in the hands of a merchant, who was an old and valued friend, a large sum of money to be employed for him—so large a sum that, if lost, he would be no longer a wealthy man. His pleasant home must then be given up, and his wife and

daughter be deprived of many of those comforts to which they had been accustomed, and which delicate health made almost necessary to Mrs. Arnott's life. This merchant, who had resided in Montreal, had lately died very suddenly. Not long before his death, some changes had taken place in his business which made new arrangements necessary to secure Mr. Arnott from loss. He had urged Mr. Arnott's coming to Montreal, as an interview between them was very desirable before the completion of these arrangements. But Mr. Arnott had very imprudently delayed going, till the death of his friend had made the evil past remedy. The letter which announced his death, mentioned also, that he had left no will—at least none had yet been found—and that his nephew would therefore inherit his property. Mr. Arnott knew this nephew, and thought him to be a very avaricious, and not very honorable man, and was sure that he would take every advantage of what he now felt to be his own



culpable negligence. You will easily see how important it was, under such circumstances, that Mr. Arnott should go as soon as possible, and examine for himself, whether there yet remained any means of making good his claims.

When he spoke of his intended departure, Mrs. Arnott turned pale, and I saw that she was much agitated, but she tried both to look and to speak cheerfully. Florence, to whom it was quite a new thought, could not so command herself. She looked from her father to her mother, said in an accent of the utmost surprise, "Go away, papa?" and burst into tears.

Mr. Arnott rose, and with an agitated countenance left the room. Mrs. Arnott knew that her husband had much at present to disturb him, much which would make any unhappiness in her or Florence peculiarly painful to him. He was parting from them for a long and dangerous winter's journey—he left her in feeble health—knew not how long he might be detained from home, or

whether he should ever return to this place as to a home. As soon as he went out, she turned to Florence, and while her own voice trembled with emotion, said, "My daughter, we must not let our regret make us selfish. Remember, your father is the greatest sufferer. He must not only endure the pain of parting, but he goes to meet great difficulty and perplexity of mind, and perhaps much hardship. Let us do our best not to add to his distress by ours. To leave us cheerful and well, will do much to keep him so." Florence tried to subdue her sobs, but for sometime very unsuccessfully. "Go to your own room, my love," said the tender mother, as she drew Florence to her and kissed her cheek, "go to your own room, and come back to us when you can come with a happy face. It is not an easy effort, Florence, but you can make it, I am sure, for your father's sake."

Florence went to her room, and when, in about an hour, she returned to us, it was with a

cheerful face, and all her usual animation of manner ; and though I often saw the tears rush to her eyes when her father's absence was named, I never again saw them fall. Even when he went, in their parting interview, she tried to look and speak cheerfully ; and, though some tears would not be restrained, it was not till he was out of sight and hearing, that she gave full vent to her sorrow.

Mr. Arnott left us early in January. The weather, during the whole of this month, was very cold and stormy, and the bleak, cheerless days seemed drearier than ever after his departure. Mrs. Arnott's health, too, continued delicate, and yet I felt that she really little needed me, for she could not have a more careful nurse, a more tender comforter, than she found in the young Florence.

The last week in January brought letters from Mr. Arnott. He had just arrived in Montreal when he wrote. Of course he could say nothing of business, but he was safe and well, and Mrs.

Arnott felt that her worst apprehensions were relieved. She had tried to be cheerful before, she was now cheerful without trying.

February opened with mild delightful weather. Florence went out one morning for a walk, but she soon came back with a bounding step, a bright color, and a countenance animated and joyous. "Oh, mamma!" she exclaimed, "it is a most delightful day, just such a day as you used to enjoy so much at the South. I almost thought I could smell the jessamine and orange flowers."

"Why, Florence," said Mrs. Arnott, "you almost tempt me to go out too," and she looked wistfully from the windows.

"And why not, dear mamma, why should you not go too? It could not hurt you—do you think it could?—to take a drive in this bright, sunshiny day. I dare say, Aunt Kitty would enjoy it, too," turning to me.

Mrs. Arnott smiled; "Not such a drive as I

should have strength for, Florence. I could not not go more than a mile or two, and that must be in the close carriage. No, no, it would be a very dull drive for both of you."

"Dull, mamma, a dull drive with you, the first time you were able to go out after being so long sick? I am sure Aunt Kitty does not think so—do you, Aunt Kitty?"

"No, my dear; and I think, if you will order the carriage, that your mother will be persuaded to try it."

Florence was off like an arrow. Everything was so soon prepared for our excursion, that Mrs. Arnott had no time to change her mind. Our drive was a very quiet one, yet Mrs. Arnott enjoyed keenly the change, the motion, and the little air which she ventured to admit. To see her enjoyment was very pleasant to me, and put Florence into the gayest spirits. We went about two miles, and were again approaching home, when we saw a handsome open sleigh coming to-

wards us, driven by a gentleman, and almost filled with young people of Florence's age. The bells drew Mrs. Arnott's attention.

"Who are those, Florence? Can you see at this distance?"

"It looks like Mr. Morton's sleigh, mamma," said Florence, coloring. "But I did not think they would come this way," she added.

"Come this way!—to go where, my child? Do you know where they are going, Florence?"

"Yes, mamma, they are going—at least they were going to M., to see some animals that were to be exhibited there to-day."

"And which you have talked so much of, and wished so much to see. I think it was scarcely kind in Clara and Edward not to ask you to go with them."

"Oh, mamma! they did ask me."

"And why did you not go, Florence?"

"I meant to go, mamma—that is, I meant to ask you this morning if I might go, but I thought

—that is—when you talked of coming, I liked so much better to come with you than I gave it up.”

“*That is,*” said Mrs. Arnott, smiling, “you thought I would enjoy my drive more if you were with me, and you thought very truly; but you should not have broken your promise, Florence, without some apology, even for such a reason.”

“It was not a positive promise, mamma, and you know it would not take them out of their way at all to stop for me, and I did leave a note for Clara, to tell her why I did not go. But what can bring them this way, I wonder?”

The sleigh was now quite near, and the gentleman driver, who proved to be Mr. Morton himself, the father of Edward and Clara, making a sign to our coachman to stop, drew up alongside of our carriage. Giving the reins to Edward, Mr. Morton sprang out, and opening the door of the carriage, shook his finger playfully at Florence, saying, “So, young lady, this is your good manners, is it?—to tell not only young ladies and gentlemen,

but an old man like me, that you like your mother's company better than ours, with all the lions, and elephants, and giraffes to boot. But we have caught you at last;—I may take her, may I not, Mrs. Arnott?"

"Oh, yes," said Mrs. Arnott, smiling at his playfulness.

"How kind it was of you, Mr. Morton, to come so much out of your way for me!"

"Kind, was it?—I understand your wheedling ways; but come along, Miss Florence, you are my prisoner now," and snatching up the laughing Florence, he bore her in triumph to the sleigh. After seating her there, and seeing that she was carefully wrapped up, he turned back to the carriage with more grave inquiries after Mrs. Arnott's health, and assurances that he would take good care of Florence.

"I am very much obliged to you for coming for her," said Mrs. Arnott, "for this exhibition is



one which she has long wished to see, and I should have been grieved had she lost it."

"As to my coming for her, I could not well help myself," said the good-humored Mr. Morton, with a laugh. Then turning to me, he added, "Our friend Florence never thinks of herself, so we feel obliged to think a great deal of her, and the grave looks and grumbling tones with which the announcement that she would not go with us was received, showed me that the only chance I had of making our little party a party of pleasure, was to overtake and capture her. You were easily tracked by your wheels, for nobody else seems willing to lose the little sleighing which this fine weather will probably leave us; but, fine as it is, I am keeping you out too long in it," seeing Mrs. Arnott draw her cloak more closely around her, "so good-by."

Hastily mounting his sleigh, he drove rapidly off, many a hearty laugh and gay voice mingling their music with the merry bells.

Another letter from Mr. Arnott came about this time, written cheerfully, hopefully, though he had not yet made even an effort to accomplish the object of his journey. This delay was occasioned by the absence of a lawyer, who had always been employed by his deceased friend, Mr. Atwater, and from whom Mr. Arnott hoped to receive important information and advice. He had been absent when Mr. Atwater died, and no one knew enough of his movements to be quite certain when he would return, yet Mr. Arnott determined to wait his arrival as patiently as he could, and to do nothing till he saw him. He would probably be detained but a short time after seeing him.

From the day this letter arrived, Florence began to prepare for her father's return, and to cast many an eager glance up the road with the hope of seeing him. But even her father's return was not the most interesting subject of thought to Florence just now. She knew the apprehensions of her parents, the change of circumstances which

possibly awaited them. For herself, this change of circumstances was not at all dreaded; for, though Florence loved her home, and would be sorry to leave it, she thought it would be almost as pleasant to live in a beautiful little cottage, covered over with roses and woodbine, with a pretty flower-garden before the door; and to raise chickens, and make butter and cheese for the market, seemed to her delightful employments. Pleasant as this picture was, and it was the only one which poverty presented to her, Florence saw that her father and mother did not regard it with quite such agreeable feelings as herself, and for their sakes she began to think how it might be avoided.

Mr. Arnott had always been a great lover of music, and to this part of Florence's education great attention had been paid, yet I had never heard her play so frequently as now. Had she not been afraid of wearying her mother, she would, I think, scarce ever have left her piano.

She suddenly stopped, one morning, when I was the only person in the room with her, in the midst of a piece of music, and turning quickly to me, said, "Aunt Kitty, do you not think I play very well?"

I was amazed, for Florence had never seemed to me a vain child. I looked at her—she met my eye, and did not seem in the least confused.

"Yes, Florence, I think you do play very well."

"As well as Miss Delany?" she again asked. This was a young lady who was a teacher of music, and whom I had once heard play at Mr. Arnott's.

Still more amazed, I replied, "I am not, perhaps, a fair judge of Miss Delany's powers, as I heard her play but once, but I think you do."

"Oh! I am so glad you think so," said Florence, springing from her seat, "for then I can give music lessons too, and make something for

papa and mamma, if he should lose that money. Do you not think I may, Aunt Kitty?"

"Yes, my dear Florence, I do not doubt you can, if it become necessary, which I hope it will not—but what put such an idea into your head?"

"I have had a great many ideas in my head about making money, since I heard papa talking of this business; but I believe what made me think of this, was Lucy Dermot's coming here last week. Lucy's mother, you know, Aunt Kitty, is very poor, and I remembered hearing Miss Delany say once, that Lucy had the finest voice and quickest ear for music of any child she had ever known, and that she thought it a great pity they could not be cultivated, for then she might support both her mother and herself handsomely. So I said to myself, mine have been cultivated, and if they are not so good as Lucy's, I may do something for papa and mamma with them."

Mrs. Arnott came in, and nothing more was said on the subject, but I now understood Flo-

rence's devotion to her music, and the pleasant expression which her countenance wore when she was practising. It was her generous motive which gave a charm to what would otherwise have been very tiresome.

## CHAPTER XIII.

## THE THREE WISHES.

“RUN to the window, mamma, run to the window, and see who is come!” cried Florence, a few days after, bursting into the room where her mother and I were sitting, just before dinner.

It was not necessary to run to the window, it was only necessary to look into Florence’s joyful face to see that her father had come. I lifted my eyes to Mr. Arnott’s face as he entered: there was no cloud on his brow, no expression but that of grateful joy in his eyes, and I said to myself, all has gone prosperously with him. It was even so. The lawyer, on his return, delivered to Mr. Arnott papers which he had drawn up for Mr.

Atwater, and which, with his will, had been left in his hands for safe-keeping. These papers fully secured Mr. Arnott's property. He had lost nothing, but had gained from past anxiety a very useful lesson—never to put off important business, even for a day.

In the evening we gathered around the fire, with grateful and happy hearts, to hear and to tell the events of those weeks of separation. Already, however, when Florence was not present, Mr. Arnott had heard from his wife of her constant tenderness, and watchful attention to her comfort, and from me of her generous plans for aiding them, should the ill fortune come which they anticipated. He did not praise her in words, but she could not meet his eye, or hear his tones, without feeling that she was dearer than ever to her father's heart. Just before we separated for the night, he drew her to him, and seating her on his knee, said, "Florence, did you ever read the fairy story of the three wishes?"



“Yes, papa.”

“Well, I will be your good fairy. Make three wishes, and they shall be granted.”

Florence laughed gayly.

“Why, papa ! fairies are always women.”

“Well, I will be a magician ; they are men, are they not ?”

“Yes.”

“Now make your wishes.”

“What shall I wish for, mamma ?”

“Stop,” said Mr. Arnott, “they must be your own wishes ; nobody must prompt them, or the spell is broken.”

“And if I make a wrong wish, may I not take it back and wish over again ?”

“No—so be careful what you say.”

Florence became grave, and was silent for a few minutes ; then looking up with a smile, said, “I have two wishes, but I cannot think of a third.”

“Let me hear the two, and you can take a longer time to think of the third.”

“Well, first, I wish little Jem O'Donnel could be sent to school, and when he gets big enough, could be taught a trade—that is one wish.”

“That is one wish! I thought that was two wishes.”

“Oh no, papa! only one.”

“Well, let it pass for one. It shall be done, that is, with his parents' consent, which you must get Aunt Kitty to procure for you. Now for the second wish.”

“I wish little Lucy Dermot could be taught music, so as to give lessons, and support her mother and herself.”

“You extravagant girl,” said Mr. Arnott, “it is well I limited your wishes to three, or I should be a ruined man.”

“Oh, papa! fairies and magicians never find

any fault with our wishes, if they are ever so extravagant."

"Well, Lucy Dermot shall be taught music, if she be able and willing to learn. Now for the third wish."

"Oh! I must have till to-morrow to think of that. That is my last wish, and it must be something very good."

"To-morrow, then, I shall expect to hear it; and now you may go and dream of it. Good-night."

I went down early the next morning to put some books, which I had finished reading, into their places in the library, an apartment communicating with the breakfast-parlor by a door, now standing open. While I was there, Mr. Arnott entered the parlor, and immediately after, Florence bounded in, exclaiming, "Oh, papa! I have found out my third wish."

"Well, my daughter, what is it?"

"Why, you know, papa, nurse has a daughter,

and she is her only child, just as I am your only child ; and she is very good, too, nurse says.”

“ Just as you are very good, I suppose.”

“ Oh no, papa, I did not mean that ; but she is going to be married—at least, she would have been married a year ago, nurse says, but the man she is to be married to is working hard to try and get a house for her to live in first—”

“ And how did you hear all this, Florence ? Did nurse know of my promise to you, and did she ask you to speak of this ?”

“ Oh no, papa ! she does not know anything about it. I thought when I had such a good chance, I ought to do something for nurse ; so, when she was putting me to bed last night, I asked her what she wished for most in the world, and she said she was so well taken care of that she had not anything to wish for ; and I said, ‘ Not if anybody was to promise to give you just what you should ask for, nurse, could you not find anything to wish for then ?’ and so nurse told me about her

daughter, and said she did wish sometimes she had a home for her, and I thought my third wish should be for a house for her. Just a small house, you know, papa, with flowers all about it, and a garden, and a poultry yard, and a dairy, and——”

“Stop, Florence—here are half a dozen wishes at once. I will tell you what I will do. I will have a small but comfortable house built——”

“And a garden to it, papa?”

“Yes, a garden and a poultry yard; the dairy can wait until it is wanted, and the flowers they can plant themselves. This house you shall give to nurse, and she can let her children have it until she wants to occupy it herself. It is only right, as you say, that something should be done for her.”

“Oh, thank you—thank you, papa! That will be my very wish.”

“And now, Florence, your three wishes have been wished, and not one of them for yourself. Have you no selfish desires, my child?”

“Oh yes, papa!” said Florence, in a serious tone, “a great many.”

“I should like to know how you find them, Florence?”

Mr. Arnott meant to express by this, that he never saw these selfish desires manifested by Florence; but she understood him literally to mean, that he wished to know how she discovered them, and she answered: “Why, you know, papa, Aunt Kitty made a little prayer for me once, when I was very, very selfish, and I thought I would say that prayer every night till I had no more selfishness left; so every night I went over in my own mind what had happened in the day, to see if I must say it, and, papa, there has never been a single night that I have not had to say it, and I am afraid it always will be so.”

“It will, my dear child, for there is selfishness in our hearts as long as we live; but while you watch over yourself, and pray earnestly to

